

# **The Borders Bill makes Britain ‘one of the most anti-refugee countries in the world’**

Medicine San Frontiers hits out at the government’s ‘unworkable, exorbitantly expensive and inhumane’ Bill

T Borders Bill will make Britain “one of the most anti-refugee countries in the world,” an international aid group has warned.

Medicine San Frontiers (MSF) UK said it was shameful that Tory MPs had trampled on efforts by peers to remove some of the cruellest elements of the Nationality and Borders Bill in a debate on Tuesday night.

Despite a number of Tory backbenchers speaking out against the proposals, the government proceeded to comfortably win a series of votes to reinsert clauses removed by the House of Lords.

They include measures to criminalize asylum-seekers for entering Britain without permission and introducing a new system whereby refugees will be treated differently depending on their means of arrival.

MPs also voted to reinstate proposals that could open the door to offshore processing centres for asylum-seekers, with just three Conservatives rebelling during the vote.

“In its current form, the Bill will enshrine the UK as one of the most anti-refugee countries in the world, at a time when the devastating impact of war and conflict is absolutely evident,” MSF UK’s advocacy officer Sophie McCann said in response to the votes.

“The government cannot be serious about this Bill — it is unworkable, exorbitantly expensive and inhumane, targeting some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

“There is nothing ‘fair’ about criminalizing, detaining, pushing back and imprisoning refugees in offshore detention centres simply because of how they

arrive in the UK.”

Later in the debate, MPs also rejected a Lords amendment which would have granted confirmed victims of modern-day slavery and trafficking support for at least 12 months.

The Bill will now return to the Lords for further consideration.

A spokesperson from the UN’s refugee agency said today it was regrettable that peers’ amendments were rejected by MPs, but added: “We believe that a compromise on amendments is still possible that would bring the legislation into compliance with commitments under international law and maintain protection for refugees in the UK.”

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